CIA Snooped At 3 Colleges

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Newly released documents from the Central Intelligence Agency's "Operation Chaos" show that the agency monitored dissident political activity at three universities in the United States in 1970 and 1971.

The groups infiltrated included the Young Socialist Alliance, the youth affiliate of the Socialist Workers Party.

The heavily censored papers, comprising 141 pages, are the first Operation Chaos files to be released. The three universities involved are Boston University, Brown and Utah State.

The documents were made public over the weekend by the Political Rights Defense Fund, which represents the Socialist Workers Party in a multimillion-dollar damage suit against the CIA and the FBI. The files were released to the fund in response to a court order in connection with the suit.

The Socialist Workers charge the agencies with illegal harassment.

Also, the CIA has released to Socialist Workers Party leader Peter Camejo less than half of its dossier on him after he requested it under the Freedom of Information Act. The agency said the rest of the material in his file is exempt from disclosure under the act.

A previously released CIA memo, dated in 1973, seven months before Chaos was reported to have been terminated, said the operation was "restricted to the collection abroad of information on foreign activities related to domestic matters."

However, the files on Camejo, the party's 1976 presidential candidate, show that the CIA kept track of virtually all his movements during trips abroad to meet with other socialist leaders. And the newly released documents show that, as late as November, 1974, the CIA was circulating information about his activities to one of its overseas stations.

Included in the Chaos documents is an unsigned memo dated February, 1970, reporting on a Brown University seminar on the Mideast crisis.

"Black militants of undetermined political connections attended," the memo said, adding:

"According to a source in attendance, the meeting and speaker were oriented toward inciting revolution and anarchy in the U.S. Among the participants . . . were Black Panthers, various Arab students at Brown, and disenchanted members of the U.S. Jewish communities."

In a September, 1970, memo, an agency employee wrote, "We have attached examples of leftist material being distributed free of charge at Boston University during registration week."

The source who obtained the material noted, the memo said, that "there were a variety of Marxist items also being sold such as revolutionary lapel buttons and a variety of pamphlets on socialism, Malcolm X and women's liberation."

A memo dated May 3, 1971, was labeled "radical activity on campus of Utah State University."

It said the campus "is more politically active than most in the state. There is an active chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance. A number of small groups also exist but are not as important."

Utah State officials yesterday expressed surprise at the disclosures. Claude J. Burtenshaw, vice president for student affairs, said he couldn't understand why the agency had bothered with the Young Socialist Alliance, which he said had only 10 hard-core members at its peak, though others joined for demonstrations.